

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 EB-07 /067 W
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R 231615Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9632

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 0520

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OAS, AR, US

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER VIGNES GIVES PRESS CONFERENCE

1. FOLLOWING HIS RETURN TO BUENOS AIRES ON JAN. 20, FONMIN VIGNES HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE 21ST. SECRETARY KISSINGER'S PROPOSED VISITS, THE MFM, THE TRADE BILL AND POSSIBLE CUBAN PRESENCE IN BUENOS AIRES WERE THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES RAISED AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE.

2. ACCORDING TO PRESENT PLAN, VIGNES SAID, SECRETARY KISSINGER WOULD PROBABLY ARRIVE IN ARGENTINA AROUND FEB. 16 BUT WORLD EVENTS, PARTICULARLY IN THE MIDDLE EAST, MIGHT AFFECT THE TIMING FOR THIS TRIP.

3. VIGNES NOTED THAT ARGENTINA HAD EXPRESSED ITS DISAPPOINTMENT WITH CERTAIN PROVISIONS IN THE TRADE ACT AND FELT THAT IT WAS A STEP BACKWARD IN INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONS. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT ALL CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION AMONG LATIN AMERICANS AND BETWEEN LATIN AMERICANS AND THE US SHOULD BE UTILIZED TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS OF THIS NATURE. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE BUENOS AIRES MFM WOULD BE A PROPER FORUM IN WHICH TO RAISE LA CONCERNS REGARDING THE TRADE ACT. FOLLOWING UP THIS POINT, NEWMEN ASKED IF IN VIEW OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS THE MARCH MFM MIGHT
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NOT BE BETTER POSTPONED. VIGNES REPLIED THAT ANY

TALK OF POSTPONEMENT AT THIS TIME WAS "PREMATURE". ARGENTINA DID NOT SEE ANY REASON WHY THE MFM COULD NOT BE HELD AS SCHEDULED IF DEVELOPMENTS WARRANTED POSTPONEMENT, IT WOULD BE, HE EMPHASIZED, AN ARGENTINA DECISION.

4. VIGNES WAS ASKED THE STATE OF PLAY WITH RESPECT TO CUBAN ATTENDANCE AT THE MFM. THE PROBLEM OF CUBA, HE ANSWERED, IS PRESENTLY BEING DEALT WITH. ARGENTINA HAD ACCEPTED THE RESPONSIBILITY OF DETERMINING LATIN AMERICAN OPINION ON THIS ISSUE AND IS IN THE PROCESS OF ASCERTAINING THAT OPINION.

5. COMMENT: LINE FOLLOWED BY VIGNES AT PRESS CONFERENCE RE KISSINGER VISIT, MFM, TRADE BILL AND CUBA FOLLOWS ALMOST VERBATIM FROM PREVIEW HE GAVE AMBASSADORS HILL AND MAILLIARD ON JANUARY 14. AS DID QUIJANO AT OAS MEETING IN WASHINGTON, VIGNES CRITICIZED ASPECTS OF TRADE BILL IN VERY MEASURED TONES EMPHASIZING THE NECESSITY TO MAINTAIN OPEN CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION ON THIS ISSUE. MORE SERIOUS PREOCCUPATION IN FOREIGN MINISTRY AT THIS TIME IS POSSIBILITY THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER MAY NOT MAKE FEB. VISIT. APPARENTLY, GOA HAS RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER HAS COMMITTED HIMSELF TO TRIP TO MIDDLE EAST DURING THE SECOND OR THIRD WEEK IN FEBRUARY. IF SECRETARY WERE NOT TO VISIT BUENOS AIRES DURING THIS PERIOD, VIGNES ACCORDING TO MINISTRY SOURCES, WOULD WANT MAXIMUM LEAD TIME SO AS TO PREPARE PUBLIC OPINION FOR POSSIBLE CANCELLATION.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CUBA, TRADE LAW, PRESS CONFERENCES, FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETINGS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BUENOS00520
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750026-0252
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750128/aaaaayan.tel
Line Count: 93
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 SEP 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <03 SEP 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FOREIGN MINISTER VIGNES GIVES PRESS CONFERENCE
TAGS: PFOR, AR, US, OAS, (KISSINGER, HENRY A), (VIGNES, ALBERTO JUAN VICENTE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006